

OKTP



LIAM EVERETT

05.15.14

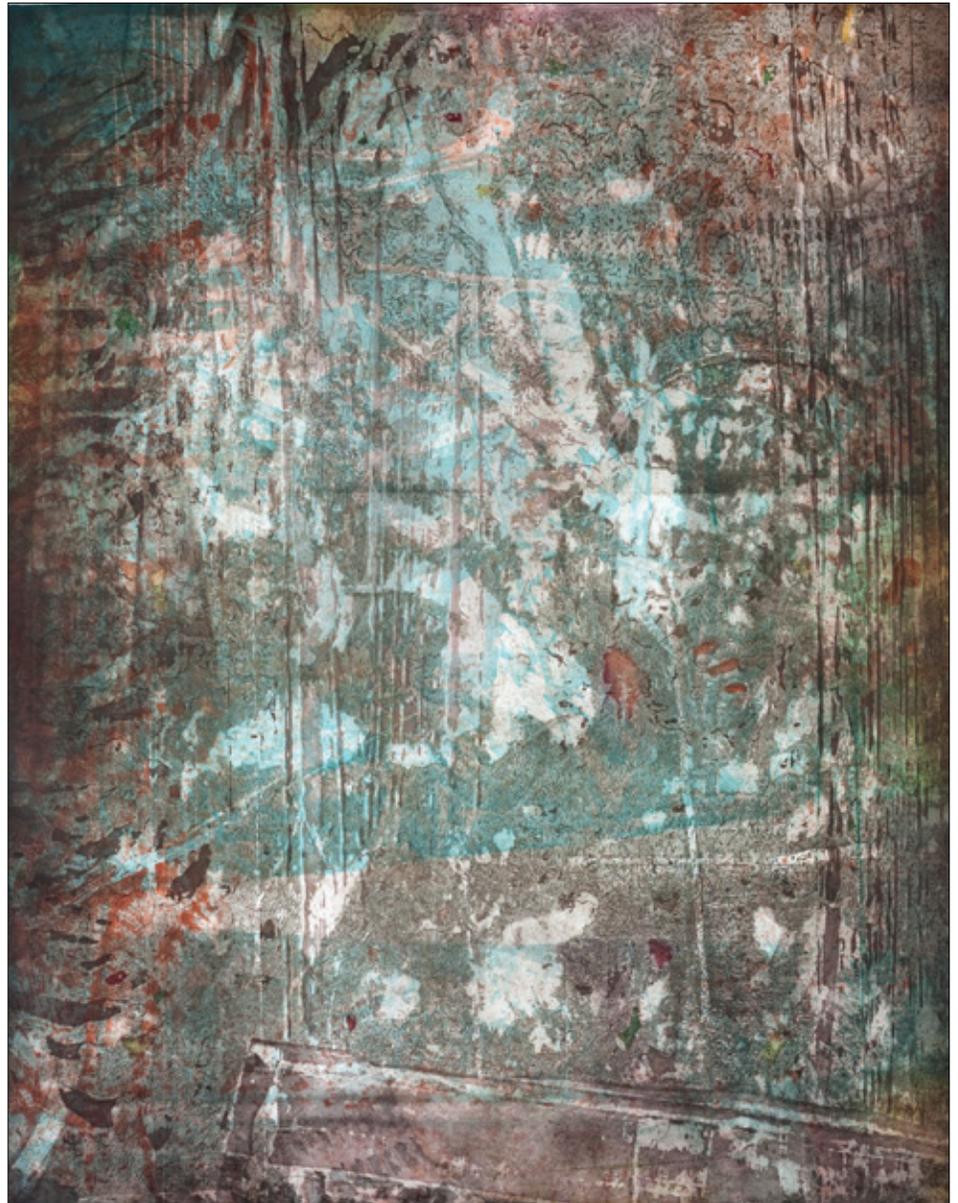
Liam Everett is an artist of contradictions. He is drawn to methods and processes that he doesn't seem to like. He works and reworks his pieces so it looks like barely anything happened. He sounds very much like a Buddhist when he talks but seems surprised that anyone would assign him that moniker. His works seem to nearly float away, yet they are anchored in his family roots of masonry. Indeed, sometimes they feel transcendent, but Everett says that's not what he is after. The resolution is left up to the viewer.

Paulson Bott Press: How did you come to the press?

Liam Everett: I was invited to participate in an edition in honor of the art dealer and collector Steven Leiber, who passed away in 2012. They got me working on some monoprints and said, "Would you like to make some other works and see where they go, and then perhaps come back at a later date?" Day one, I thought, "For me this is luxury. This is heaven." I have a hard time working with other people, and here it's kind of crazy how easy it is, like we dropped off the same ship, the same planet. I don't like to just work from ideas. My practice drifts, but it always comes back. All of the production and ideas are coming from the practice, rather than the ideas leading to the execution of an object.

Q: Often in printmaking there's an idea that drives the process.

LE: There is, and it's very limited. That's why I haven't done it. I stayed away from



UNTITLED (SIGUER), 2014

Color flatbite, soapground, and spitbite aquatint etching with drypoint;
50.75" x 40.5"; Edition of 35



RONDO I, 2013
Ink on silk organza, wood hoop; 14" diameter; Edition of 10

printmaking for years because I just wanted to pull my hair out. There's waiting and talking, you sit and smoke a cigarette, you have coffee. A lot of artists and other kinds of laborers like to work in this fashion. I think it can be productive, but for me it's completely counterintuitive and counterproductive. At the end of the day, I'm exhausted—because, even in my studio, I've never had a couch or a chair. If I have a visitor, I'll go and get chairs and bring them for the visit, and as soon as the visit is over, remove the chairs. I will also rearrange my studio completely once or twice a month so I'm not sure where things are. There is this constant sense of destabilization.

Q: But also discovery, right?

LE: There's discovery, there's chance, but what's fixed is the practice. Half the time in the studio, I have no inspiration. But it doesn't matter whether I'm up or down. If

I have this practice, there's movement, and out of this movement, occasionally, there's a spark.

Q: So how does it work here, when the process is making, thinking, setting up, waiting?

LE: We are working on several plates. I knew coming into this visit that I had to busy myself. And we talked about it ahead of time: "Well, maybe you work with rondo painting [paintings in the shape of a circle], and plates, and Ts." And I'm not sure if they're going to go together or separately, or how we'll build them.

I grew up doing a lot of construction work, and my family comes from a line of masons—except I'm not a mason. But what was drilled into my head is, "You don't show up to the worksite without the material and the labor." In my studio, there's always too much to do,



RONDO II, 2013
Ink on silk organza, wood hoop; 14" diameter; Edition of 10



RONDO III, 2013
Ink on silk organza, wood hoop; 14" diameter; Edition of 10



UNTITLED (CAHORS), 2013
Color flatbite and aquatint etching; 26" x 21"; Edition of 35

and that's how I wanted to approach my time here. Also, I don't try to finish things. I just try to push them into a place where they're working. And again, every now and then out of this working field, there will be a spark, so we'll catch it. You know, they might catch it before I do and say, "Oh! Okay, there's something." And then maybe you home in on that and push it a little bit further, or reverse it, do something to it.

Q: With the round pieces, how do you know when they're finished?

LE: I've learned to say, "This is a finished work," because that's what one needs to hear. But I really don't have that experience, that a thing's finished. If it is, then for me instead of saying, "I'm finished," it flashes this light that says, "Danger," and that's what I want to go away from. I'm not interested in resolution or a conclusion. I stop working on something when it feels foreign. Something has arrived and I can't quite put my finger on it. I know how I pulled it and pushed it. I could go over the recipe a little bit. I can't do it again. I've tried—that's how I make bad things: something exciting happens, then I try to do it again. I get close to it and it just falls apart. And that foreign thing that appears is often disconcerting. It is



UNTITLED (MONTOLIEU), 2013
Color flatbite and aquatint etching; 26" x 21"; Edition of 35

something like an anxious object, which I'm always attracted to, something that's been destabilized and that pushes me anxiously into the next piece.

Q: Do you come back to it in a few weeks to see if it feels like you're getting that experience?

LE: Sometimes it just shows up. A good example, with some of these more transparent round pieces, there is an immediate sense that I just don't know where they came from, and I like that. I know I can let them out into the world and let the realities do whatever they do. In that same vein, there's something in that foreignness that arrives. There's a flexibility. I can let a piece go when I'm convinced that it's flexible; that it will have a half-life, that it will change, that there's a kind of built-in evolution.

Q: Does that include decay?

LE: Sometimes. But for me, the relationship is closer to light. I was going to say light and space, but that's too shallow. I want to be able to stand in front of a piece at a diagonal, and then walk a few feet away, look at it from the opposite diagonal and have a different experience, and then look at it straight on and something else is revealed. An object



Liam Everett at the Paulson Bott Studio

has a potential to be animate—it takes heat, light, it expands, contracts. What comes forth is something that I wouldn't have been able to articulate myself. It asserts itself. ✦



UNTITLED (AHNUR), 2013
Color flatbite and aquatint etching; 26" x 21"; Edition of 35



UNTITLED (KHONSU), 2013
Color flatbite and aquatint etching; 26" x 21"; Edition of 35



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UNTITLED (NUXIBUXBAASE AWADDEE), 2013

Color flatbite and aquatint etching; 26" x 21"; Edition of 35



DESIGN: MICHAEL OSBORNE DESIGN

UNTITLED (NET), 2013

Color softground etching; 26" x 21"; Edition of 35

